

# Grant Improves Connectivity For Wyalusing Students

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—BY WARREN HOWELER—



Dr. Jason Bottiglieri

A federal grant awarded to the Wyalusing Area School District (WASD) is helping to improve broadband Internet access for many students and their families.

The funding was in the initial amount of \$268,235 and was made available from the Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF) that is overseen by the Federal Communications Commission.

The funding is being used by the district to purchase Wi-Fi cellular hotspots for use by families of students in both the elementary and high schools, as well as the purchase of Chromebooks for elementary school students to have at home.

“The final official amount (of the grant) will depend upon the need for devices in students’ homes and will be recalculated based upon need,” said Wyalusing School Superintendent Dr. Jason Bottiglieri.

The district has received over 150 requests for hotspots from families across both school buildings.

Meanwhile, the Chromebook requests for elementary school students number approximately 350, according to Bottiglieri.

“We are finalizing the data collection process from parent respondents, Chromebooks will be ordered and will need to be activated once they arrive and then distributed to parents,” he said. “Regarding the Wi-Fi hotspots, we are near completion for activation and will be able to distribute them to parents shortly.”

The WASD was the only school district in Bradford County to be awarded these federal funds, Bottiglieri noted.

“When the ECF grant was announced by the federal government for \$7 billion, I was very excited,” he said. “This grant allows our district to support the importance of continuity of education and allows students to further engage with homework, research, projects and, in general, extend their learning opportunities in the evening and weekends with parents who serve as a key partner in education. I have long been a proponent of narrowing the broadband Internet gap for the underserved communities such as ours. While this grant doesn’t completely solve the broadband access disparity across the commonwealth, it does allow for a positive impact for a group of our students and families.”